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The Marathon Mystery

A Story of Manhattan
By BURTON E. STEVENSON
Author of "The Holliday Case"
Copyright, 1904, by Henry Holt and Company

Amid a silence strained, absolute the coroner took from his pocketbook the button he had found in Graham's hand.

"I believe Mr. Drysdale will find it difficult to explain this, gentlemen," he said, his face glowing more and more and he held against the place the button he had found.

It fitted exactly; the button matched the others on the coat; the shroud of cloth was of the same color and material as the remainder of the garment. It was a proof there could be no disputing.

"Let us go up to the house and have a talk with Mr. Drysdale," said the coroner.

They followed him in silence from the bathhouse and up the broad gravel path.

"Shall I have Drysdale called down?" asked Delroy as they stepped inside.

"No," said the coroner; "I'd prefer to see him in his room."

"Very well," the other acquiesced, and led the way through the still deserted hall and up the stairs.

At the top, Tremaine turned to the coroner.

"If you don't mind," he said, "I'll go on to my room. I'm feeling pretty well used up."

The others went on to the next door. Delroy knocked.

"Who's there?" queried Drysdale's voice.

"Open up, Jack," called Delroy. "We've got to see you on some rather important business."

"Important business?" Drysdale repeated, and they heard him cross the room. Then the door was flung open.

"Come in—why, what the deuce is all this about, Dickie?"

"Come in and shut the door, Jack," replied Delroy quietly. "This gentleman is Coroner Heffebower of Babylon. He wishes to ask you a few questions."

Drysdale answered with a stare of amazement, but he stood aside and let them pass into the room.

"I was packing, Dickie," he said. "I've got to go back to New York today, to look after some investments. I like to stay, old man, but I really can't."

Something in the faces of his auditors stopped him, and he changed color.

"Sit down, Mr. Drysdale," said the coroner solemnly, himself taking a chair. "Our business may take some little time. You own a revolver, I believe."

"Yes," said Jack, "a Smith & Wesson. I was just looking for it. When I opened my trunk just now I missed it."

"How long has it been since you saw it?"

"I can't say—two or three days, perhaps."

"Did you have your revolver last night?"

"No, I haven't seen it for a day or two, I tell you."

"Is it your revolver?" asked the coroner, producing the weapon.

Drysdale took it and looked at it with an air of astonishment.

"Why, yes," he said. "Where did you get it?"

"And how is it your revolver?"

"Yes, but what?"

"You wore it when you went out last night?"

"Yes, but I insist!"

"Mr. Drysdale," asked the coroner sternly, "for what purpose did you go out last night, and where did you go?"

Drysdale sprang to his feet, his face red with anger.

"Why, you infernal busybody!" he cried. "It's none of your business."

"You refuse to answer?"

"I most certainly do, and I think you'd better go back to Babylon."

"I shall go back in due time, Mr. Drysdale," retorted the coroner in a cool voice, holding up his hand. "Perhaps you have as yet not heard of the murder committed here last night and of the robbery which accompanied it?"

Drysdale paled suddenly; his hands were trembling.

"Murder?" he repeated blankly. "Robbery?"

"Precisely. Graham, the gardener, was murdered last night and Mrs. Delroy's pearl necklace stolen. You were the only person who left the house. Your revolver was found beside him. It's button, torn from your coat, was found in his hand. I hope you will now perceive the wisdom of giving us a detailed account of your movements while you were away from the house."

Drysdale had listened with a growing pallor. When the coroner had finished, he said:

"Do you know where he came from?"

"No; it mattered nothing to me."
"He never talked about his past?"
"His past? No, no. What was it to us? We had a pretty, pretty place at Fond-Carre. Tambou! I wish I was there now!"
"You were happy there?"
"You—except for the times doudoux was in his black spells?"
"His black spells?"
"Yes—oh, then every one ran from him—even I. He was terrible—raving and cursing 'Mseur Johnson'!"
"Johnson?" I repeated, with a sudden leap of the heart. "Who was he, Cecily?"
"He was doudoux's zombi," she answered with conviction, and crossed herself.

"Then he didn't live at Fond-Carre?"
"At Fond-Carre? Oh, no! He was a zombi—in the air, in the earth, everywhere. Doudoux would fight with him an hour at a time. Oh, it was terrible!"

I leaned back in my chair and watched the smoke from my cigarette circling upward. I remembered the letter that had been tattooed on the arm of the man killed in suit fourteen.

So Tremaine had some cause to hate him—he had helped him, had supplied him with whisky, with money, through fear and not through friendship.

establish that was to take another forward.

"Did he have those spells often, Cecily?" I asked at last.

"Oh, no; sometimes not for months. Then, phut, the zombi would charm him."

"Charm him?"

"With a little scrap of paper, yes. There would come a letter; doudoux would open it; always in it there would be a little piece of paper. Sometimes it had writing on it, sometimes painting, as though it had been cut from a newspaper. Then, tambou, doudoux's face would grow black, he would tear the paper into little bits, uttering curses the most terrible, and we would all run!"

Clippings from a newspaper! Here was a coincidence. But I nudged my brain vainly. I could form no theory as to why a clipping should cause those fits of rage.

"The last one, though, did not give him a spell," she added, after a moment. "We were watching the sunset out across the water when Doudou brought the letter to him. This time it was printing and writing both. I got up, ready to flee, for I thought that would be twice as bad. But no. He sat reading it, and his eyes glinted."

Then he sent me running for his hat and hurried away to St. Pierre. When he came back he told me that we were to come at once to New York."

"You have some very pretty jewelry, Cecily," I said, touching the great brooch of gold that gleamed at her throat.

She laughed like a pleased child.

"Yes. Are they not pretty, eh? Let me show you," and, springing from the couch, she ran into her bedroom. In a moment she was back again, a box of inland ebony in her hands.

"See!" she cried, and threw back the lid.

Indeed they were worth seeing, and it was not wholly to disarm her suspicions, if she had any, that I looked over them. At last I came to the piece I wanted.

(To Be Continued)

A POPULAR LAMENT

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COL. H. S. OLCOTT DEAD

From Adyar, Madras, India, comes the news of the death of Col. H. S. Olcott, the founder of the Theosophical Society.

Mr. Olcott was injured in a railroad accident in Italy some time ago, from which complications arose that ended in his demise on February 17.

The Colonel was 75 years old at the time of his death, being born in Orange, N. J., in 1832. He was an author of some renown and very instructive lessons came from his pen on the culture of sugar cane.

In 1875 he assisted in founding the Theosophical Society in New York.

Col. Olcott was in Honolulu in 1901 en route from India to California, and delivered a number of lectures while here.

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Almost Personal

Serial Story No. 27

Some of our merchants are not very busy, so at such times they stand around and talk to their clerks and explain why it is.

They say people are patronizing the Oriental business houses.

Then the clerks sympathize and they all talk the matter over with the next customer and deplore the fact that if the haoles continue patronizing Asiatics, American business must go to smash.

I have often heard these kinds of talks taking place and while I was listening to what they had to say I looked with a good deal of interest at the linen they were wearing because the pake who washed it didn't get the blueing scattered evenly and had failed to remove a laundry tape with Chinese characters on it.

At such times I would like to mention that I am in the laundry business, but I am conscious of others' feelings and reserve my say for this space, which belongs to me.

—BRUCE HARTMAN.

Children Have Troubles

just the same as grown-ups. One of the most distressing complaints from which children suffer is worms and unless the proper remedy is used it will be of long standing. Let us recommend to your notice

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Ladies' diamond ring, five stones. Finder will be suitably rewarded by returning same to this office. 3530-1w

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